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Date	22 November 2016		
Ward (s) affected	Dorking North and South	Key Decision	No
Subject	Dorking Parking Review		
RECOMMENDATIONS			
Free Parking			
1. That 30 minutes free parking be introduced in designated bays, as set out below:			
4 in Reigate Road (near Medwyn Centre)			
6 in Wathen Road			
7 in Southside			
3 in West Street			
2 in South Street			
3 in St Martins Walk			
2. That Pay and Display machines be reconfigured to issue free 30 minute tickets for use in these bays.			
Car Park Designations			
3. That North Street, West Street and Wathen Road (High Street) car parks be made short stay only (maximum stay 3 hours).			
4. That only North Street residents be allowed to continue to park in North Street car park on a long stay basis.			
Charging			
5. That as part of the programme of replacing Pay and Display machines, further alternative options for paying for parking be introduced in order to improve the accessibility to drivers.			
6. To develop proposals for differential charging in order to ensure the best use of parking spaces across Mole Valley.			
Other			
7. That a costing exercise be undertaken to identify if there is a robust business plan to increase the number of spaces in the Reigate Road car park.			
8. That Southside and St Martins Walk car parks be assessed against the Park Mark Standards to identify what works would be necessary to achieve that			

standard.

9. That following the completion of the District wide car park condition survey a programme of car parking improvements is developed and shared with businesses.
10. That the Chairman of the Local Committee be recommended to reconvene the MVDC/SCC Parking Task Group to:
 - Review the effectiveness of the Resident Parking Schemes, assess capacity, and identify whether any additional spaces can be provided for businesses
 - Identify any further opportunities to increase on-street capacity
 - Agree signage improvements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dorking Parking Review has been undertaken following the petition considered by Council in February 2016 which requested that the Council introduce 30 minutes free parking in Dorking.

The review concludes that a number of changes should be made in Dorking, including the introduction of 30 minute free parking bays in locations that support 'pop and shop' businesses, and changes to the designation of certain car parks so that they continue to support businesses.

The report outlines that these changes should improve the parking offer in Dorking for visitors and businesses, with no significant impact on the Council's budget.

CORPORATE PRIORITY OUTCOMES

PROSPERITY

A vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages

- Promote the culture and economy of the market town of Dorking.
- Make best use of our town centre parking, balancing the needs of residents and local businesses.

The Executive has the authority to determine the Recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 26 February 2016, the Council received a petition that stated "*The Dorking Chamber of Commerce request that Mole Valley District Council introduce a year long trial of a FREE half Hour in the Council's car parks.*"
- 1.2 Council resolved:
 1. That the Council welcomes the work undertaken by the Dorking Chamber of Commerce and the evolved set of options presented beyond the original implications of their petition.
 2. That, following consultation with local residents and community representatives, the Executive of the Council are asked to formally review the options for detailed practical measures that could be introduced in relation to parking charges in Dorking to maintain the character of the market town, to reduce environmental impact, to support the prosperity of both the town centre and our rural economies, to provide overall value for money to local residents and to help residents to access the

services they need, in line with the agreed Corporate Strategy and Priorities of the Council.

- 1.3 The Executive Member advised that the review would be reported to the Executive in the final quarter of 2016.

2. Process

- 2.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Business Community and local residents. The specific views of residents of North Street have been sought as they would be impacted by one suggestion that emerged through business consultation.

- 2.2 Meetings involving the Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Property, Parking and Economic Development and Environmental Services Manager have taken place with the following business groups:

- West Street Traders
- Dorking Town Centre Forum
- Dorking Chamber of Commerce
- Dorking Churches Together
- Dorking Business Breakfast

- 2.3 Transition Dorking opted not to participate in the consultation and Friends of Dorking did not respond to requests to meet.

- 2.4 A survey was published on the Council's website between 24 August and 19 September which had 873 responses.

- 2.5 At the Council meeting that considered the petition, reference was made to the trial that had been undertaken in the London Borough of Kingston, where some free on-street parking had been introduced in secondary shopping areas with the intention of supporting local businesses. The effectiveness of this trial has also been considered as part of the process.

3. Evidence Gathering

- 3.1 A number of consistent messages came through the engagement with the business community. The key findings from each group are summarised below.

3.2 Town Centre Representative Groups

Dorking Business Breakfast

- Key issue is the residents parking schemes and the impact on businesses – this needs to be reviewed to enable businesses to use the area as well

Dorking Chamber of Commerce

- Key issue is the introduction of some free parking spaces to support the 'pop and shop' businesses. Proposed the following:
 - 4 in Reigate Road (near Medwyn Centre)
 - 6 in Wathen Road
 - 7 in Southside
 - 3 in West Street
 - 2 in South Street
 - 3 in St Martins Walk
 - 0 in all other car parks
- These spaces should be free for 30 minutes, and the pay and display machines should be reconfigured to dispense free tickets and make enforcement easier.

- This would total 25 spaces, equivalent to 2% of car parking capacity in Dorking car parks.
- No changes should be made to the current provision of on street free parking with a maximum stay of 60 minutes.
- The spaces in Southside car park are too small and should be made bigger.
- Resident parking should not be allowed in North Street car park (should move to Church Street).
- Some carers parking should be created in Church Street car park.

Dorking Churches Together

- Not convinced that 30 minutes free parking will help traders – it will not encourage people to spend more time in the town.
- No changes needed to current on street parking bays.
- Reigate Road car park should be decked.
- Car parks should support the traders.

Dorking Town Centre Forum

- Perception of insufficient shopper parking.
- Signage to car parks needs improving – signs are too small.
- West Street car park – entry and exit of the car park needs improving in terms of signage and car park surface.
- Need a better balance between permit parking and P&D parking.
- More capacity should be provided at Reigate Road car park either through decking or going underground.
- Some free spaces (3) need to be provided for the Medwyn Centre.
- A small number of free ‘pop and shop’ bays should be provided elsewhere in the town in car parks that support pharmacies and banks.
- Car parks need to be more welcoming, in particular:
 - Southside car park – which needs improvements
 - St Martins Walk – which can look messy
- Electronic signs should be introduced – showing available car parking spaces .

West Street Traders

- Business Parking affects ability of shoppers to access their businesses. North Street and West Street car parks should be short stay only, with permit holders using Church Street and St Martins Walk.
- Car park surfacing needs improving.
- The introduction of residents parking zones has had a negative impact on businesses. SCC should allow some business permits to be sold in these areas.
- The maximum income from the low paid worker permit should be increased to £20k pa.
- Signage to car parks needs improving.
- Improved policing of parking in St Martins Walk required.

- Monthly payment for season tickets should be introduced.

3.3 Resident Feedback – online survey

A detailed summary of the response is attached at appendix one although some of the key findings were:

- The most popular car parks were St Martins Walk, Southside and Reigate Road
- 60% of people considered that there was adequate parking provision in Dorking
- 70% of people thought that signage was adequate
- 87% thought that the current charging was reasonable
- 25% thought that there should be different parking charges for the most convenient car parks
- 85% believed that some free short stay parking should be provided
- 68% believed that some central car parks should be made short stay only

Respondents had the opportunity to provide their own thoughts on parking. There was a large number of responses, with some common consistency around:

- Large, electronic signs highlighting the number of spaces in car parks
- Improved and clearer parent and baby parking
- Free 30 minutes parking, particularly at the Medwyn Centre
- Improve the built quality of car parks
- Introduce a new 20/30/40 minute charge (the times suggested)
- Resident parking in Dorking is having a negative knock on effect to residents who do not live in these areas
- Better options for town centre workers
- The need for more enforcement in the High Street and in parent and baby bays
- A recognition that parking is reasonably priced (and a counter view that it is too expensive)
- Traffic congestion is a major issue
- Spaces should be wider – particularly in Southside

3.4 North Street Residents

The proposals from the businesses about changing West Street and North Street car parks to short stay only, would impact in particular on residents of North Street. These residents do not have any private or on street parking available to them, and therefore many of them purchase a permit to park in North Street car park. There are nine residents in this position, and therefore they were written to, to obtain their specific views. The key points made by the residents are:

- There is not enough capacity for residents and business permit holders in that part of town. Church Street would not have the capacity, which would lead to residents having to sometimes park in St Martins Walk, which residents would not be comfortable with
- The views of residents should take primacy over businesses

- There are better options for shoppers, in particular, Waitrose
- Parents of small children would really struggle if they could not park in that car park (there are a number of young families living in North Street)
- The availability of parking in that car park had been a key factor in one resident buying a property last year
- Could residents be also allowed to park in Myrtle Road?
- The current arrangement does not actually guarantee a parking space in North Street
- Changing the designation of the car park to short stay only will increase traffic flow and potentially impact on pedestrian and driver safety
- It will make it more difficult to take waste to the Community Recycling Centres
- Church Street car park is not as well lit and neither are the streets, which causes some safety concerns

3.5 **LB Kingston Trial**

The London Borough of Kingston introduced a scheme in November 2015 to provide 30 minutes free parking in some of its bays in secondary shopping areas. This provided around 150 free parking spaces. The feedback from the scheme has been positive from businesses.

To compensate for the loss of income, the Council increased the charges for longer stays in the bays – so whilst it is free for up to 30 minutes, people who want to park for longer have to pay a higher charge than previously. Furthermore, customers are not allowed to park for 30 minutes and then buy a ticket. The free parking scheme is purely for people who want to shop for no more than 30 minutes.

3.6 **Resident Parking Zones**

Parking in Dorking has changed quite significantly in the last two years, largely as a result of the introduction of Resident Parking Zones in Myrtle Road and the Rothes Road/Wathen Road/Hart Road area. This has impacted on the town in a number of ways including:

- Town centre workers having more difficulty finding somewhere to park without paying
- Shift in on street parking to other parts of the town (which in turn will lead other areas to seek Resident Parking Zones)
- Introduction of special parking permits (low paid worker permit and discounted business permit) to support local workers

The discussions with businesses have illustrated that the introduction of the parking zones has been a key driver regarding concerns regarding parking.

4. **Findings**

4.1 It is clear from both residents and businesses that the changing nature of the town centre necessitates some changes to the way parking is provided in car parks in Dorking.

4.2 There is a clear demand for some free parking, with the belief that this will help to support some key 'pop and shop' businesses. There is no evidence about the effectiveness or otherwise of the provision of free parking, however, now appears to be a good time to introduce a small number of free bays, and the request from the Chamber of Commerce appears reasonable.

- 4.3 The policing of these bays is vital. Free tickets will be available from Pay and Display machines. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued to people who use them outside of the free bays and if people overstay.
- 4.4 Parking charges in Mole Valley have remained stable for a number of years. Some adjustments were made to the parking tariffs in 2013 to enable the introduction of a new charging structure. However, the basic charge of 60p for one hour has been in place since 2009.
- 4.5 There is a recognition amongst businesses and residents that the parking charges in Mole Valley are low. In fact, the car parking charges in Mole Valley are extremely competitive with other local authorities. The charging periods are smaller than many (8.00am – 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday), with free parking offered in the lead up to Christmas with free Saturday afternoon parking in car parks on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas and ‘free after three’ parking offered for specific town and village events.
- 4.6 An analysis of town centre charges in neighbouring authorities highlights how inexpensive parking in Mole Valley is. Most authorities have differential parking charges in place according to the popularity of the car park, and the table below sets out the charge for a single hour’s parking in towns.

Authority	Lowest One Hour Charge	Highest One Hour Charge	Minimum Spends
Mole Valley	60p	60p	60p/60mins
Reigate and Banstead	£1.10	£1.40	40p/20 mins
Epsom and Ewell	£1	£1.80	£1/60 mins
Elmbridge	80p	90p	40p/30 mins
Waverley	60p	90p	60p/60mins
Horsham	£1.10	£1.20	70p/30 mins
Crawley	£1.00	£1.00	£1/60 mins
Average (excl MV)	93p	£1.20	1.57p/minute

NB: This table refers to local authority town centre car parks only.

- 4.7 It is recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of differential charging in Mole Valley. All car parks in Mole Valley have the same charging structure (although in Ashted and Bookham the minimum stay is thirty minutes), with visitors paying the same charge in the most popular and convenient car parks as they do in those that are less centrally located. The Council’s car parking strategy, agreed by Council in 2013, stated that the Council should “*Introduce differential charging to encourage maximum use of car parks in a way that supports the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers and commuters*”.
- 4.8 Furthermore, the Council’s Standing Budget Panel, in its report on the development of the 2016/17 budget stated “*Although it was recognised that the 1p per minute parking charge was popular with local residents, it was also felt that continuing to maintain charges at this level had a negative impact on the Council’s budget.*”

Therefore alternative options, such as differential charging, should be considered for the future.”

- 4.9 Based on the existing charges, competitor rates and resident feedback, it is considered that differential charging could be successful in Dorking, and elsewhere in Mole Valley. No proposals for this are being made at this time, although consideration should be given to developing a District wide review of charging.
- 4.10 People’s expectations around how they want to pay for services are changing. The Council responded to this through the introduction of RingGo cashless parking in 2013 which has proved to be a popular service. A programme to replace the Council’s pay and display machines is being developed, and as part of that programme, new machines will be provided to allow drivers to pay for parking via card and other forms of cashless payment.
- 4.10 There is a balance to be struck with regard to signage. Some work was undertaken a few years ago to reduce the amount of unnecessary signage in Dorking, and whatever is provided needs to be appropriate. Surrey County Council Highways are responsible for signage, and this issue will be discussed with them.
- 4.11 New pedestrian wayfinding signage is being introduced in Dorking. This is aimed at pedestrians to improve navigation through Dorking, including the location of car parks.
- 4.12 Congestion is clearly a key issue in the town which has been recognised by both this Council and Surrey County Council. The authorities are working together to develop a Dorking Traffic Study. A brief for the study has been agreed between the two authorities, and the procurement process will commence shortly.

Financial Implications

There will be a slight impact on Pay and Display income as a result of the free parking. The report recommends that 2% of Dorking’s bays are made free for 30 minutes and it is considered that any shortfall can be accommodated within the Parking budget.

It is possible that there will be an increase in Penalty Charge Notices if people overstay, or misuse the free bays.

Legal Implications

Changes to the charging regime or the length of stay in any of the Council’s car parks will require amendments to the Council’s Off-Street Parking Places Order 1997 which regulates the use of all of its off-street car parks. Amending the Order requires the Council to consult a number of bodies, including the Police and the County Council as the highway authority, as well as members of the public.

The consent of the County Council must be obtained and any representations received will be considered and taken into consideration before a final decision is made. Before the Order is amended, details of the proposed amendments will need to be published in a local newspaper, inviting representations and, once the Order has been amended, similar details will need to be published and notices displayed in car parks to bring to the attention of members of the public the changes made to the Order and the date they take effect.

5.0 OPTIONS

Various proposals have been made by businesses, representative groups and the community as part of this process. Executive can choose to accept the report as recommended, or change the recommendations as it considers appropriate. It could also require further work to be undertaken and the report reconsidered at a future date.

Careful consideration has been given to the feedback received throughout this process and the recommendations set out are considered to be appropriate in order to improve the parking offer in Dorking.

6.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Officer commentary

The Monitoring Officer confirms that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

S151 Officer commentary

The S151 Officer confirms that all financial implications have been taken into account.

Risk Implications

There are potential reputational risks arising from increased Penalty Charge Notices if the bays are misused. Communications will be organised to make this clear, and appropriate signage will be put in place, particularly near the Medwyn Centre to ensure that residents are aware.

Equalities Implications

There are not considered to be any equalities implications as a consequence of this report. The recommendations make no changes to the rights of Blue Badge holders.

Employment Issues

None.

Sustainability Issues

People using vehicles has clear environmental implications, however, it is not considered that the recommendations in this report will lead to such significant changes in behaviour so as to have any sustainability implications.

Consultation

Details of the consultation undertaken are set out in the report.

Communications

A communications plan will be developed to promote the changes which would be introduced as a consequence of this report. Specific communication will be undertaken with business groups and residents in the town, with wider communications being undertaken to promote the free bays.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation Feedback

How can we make parking in Dorking better?

Parking can play an important part in a town's success. Therefore, we are continually seeking to ensure our parking offer in Dorking suits the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. In recent months, I have been meeting with local traders and community groups in Dorking to better understand their parking needs. Those conversations have informed the questions in this survey. I now want to hear from individuals within Dorking whether you would support some of the proposals I have heard from local groups.

I would be grateful if you complete the following short survey. Your opinions are essential as we plan for the future.

Thank you.

Cllr Charles Yarwood
Executive Member for Property and Parking

Which three car parks do you use most often? (1 being the car park you use most often.)

	1	2	3
Dene Street	42 (26.8%)	50 (31.8%)	65 (41.4%)
Wathen Road	83 (27.4%)	109 (36.0%)	111 (36.6%)
Southside (Sainsburys)	241 (44.2%)	186 (34.1%)	118 (21.7%)
South Street	44 (24.9%)	50 (28.2%)	83 (46.9%)
West Street	34 (20.6%)	50 (30.3%)	81 (49.1%)
North Street	15 (20.8%)	15 (20.8%)	42 (58.3%)
Church Street	22 (24.7%)	20 (22.5%)	47 (52.8%)
Junction Road	7 (11.7%)	14 (23.3%)	39 (65.0%)
Reigate Road	104 (31.2%)	117 (35.1%)	112 (33.6%)
St Martin's Walk	371 (54.6%)	185 (27.2%)	123 (18.1%)

Do you think more car parking needs to be provided in Dorking?

347 (39.7%) *Yes*

526 (60.3%) *No*

Do we need to improve/increase the signs to Dorking's car parks?

255 (29.5%) *Yes*

610 (70.5%) *No*

Please tell us where you think the new signs should be and for which car parks.

169 (100.0%)

What would you consider to be a reasonable charge for an hour's parking?

602 (87.0%) *60p*

19 (2.7%) *70p*

28 (4.0%) *80p*

37 (5.3%) *£1*

6 (0.9%) *£1.20*

Other

232 (100.0%)

To what extent do you agree with this statement: "Parking charges influence where I choose to shop."

509 (58.0%) *I strongly agree*

253 (28.8%) *I agree*

77 (8.8%) *I disagree*

39 (4.4%) *I strongly disagree*

At what level would the hourly rate change your shopping habits ?

425 (49.4%) *80p*

220 (25.6%) *£1*

107 (12.4%) *£1.20*

56 (6.5%) *More than £1.20*

52 (6.0%) *The cost of car parking would never change my shopping habits.*

In order to manage demand, should the car parks most conveniently located for the town centre cost more than the car parks further away?

221 (25.3%) *Yes*

654 (74.7%) *No*

To what extent do you agree with this statement: “I would be willing to pay more for parking in a centrally located car park because it gives me greater convenience than a car park further away from the High Street.”

50 (5.7%) *I strongly agree*
197 (22.5%) *I agree*
284 (32.5%) *I disagree*
344 (39.3%) *I strongly disagree*

Should some of the existing spaces in Dorking’s car parks be converted to short stay (30 minutes) free parking?

751 (85.5%) *Yes*
127 (14.5%) *No*

Would you like to see some of our more central car parks, such as North Street and West Street, dedicated entirely to short-stay Pay and Display parking only? i.e. stays limited to three hours.

592 (68.3%) *Yes*
275 (31.7%) *No*

Please share any other thoughts on parking in Dorking.

589 (100.0%)

Thank you for your help.